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The Miner's Pick

CELEBRATE INDEPENDENCE DAY BY MINING SAFELY

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Fatality Update

The following is the year to date metal and non metal fatality count as of August 2, 1999, for the NE District and the nation.

1999		1998		1997	
NE	NATL	NE	NATL	NE	NATL
3	28	4	32	2	42

Fatality Trends

As of August 3, 1999 an alarming trend is emerging nationwide in the metal/non metal mining industry. Powered haulage fatalities seem to be on the fast track to eclipse even the five year high of 16 fatal accidents in 1997. Thirteen miners lost their lives to powered haulage accidents in 1998, while there were 10 in 1996, and 8 in 1995. So far, in 1999, there have been 8 lives lost to powered haulage accidents.

Mine operators are encouraged to take a closer look at their operations to eliminate powered haulage hazards and heighten the awareness of their employees to the dangers.

For more information, contact John Tyler, at the Mine Safety and Health Academy, (304) 256-3541.

Metal and Nonmetal Accident Newsletters

MSHA will be publishing a bi-monthly newsletter to inform interested parties of recent fatalities and serious accidents in the metal and nonmetal industry. Information in the news letter is based on preliminary data only and does not represent final determinations regarding the nature of the incident or conclusions regarding the causes of the fatality. The information presented is to assist in focusing on unsafe conditions or unsafe acts which are

the cause of accidents. The first newsletter addresses the fatalities that have occurred in January through February, 1999 (Volume 1, Issue 1). This information is also available on MSHA's Home Page at:

www.msha.gov or by contacting the Northeast District Office at:

(724) 772-2333

Mine Hazard Awareness Campaign

Stay Out - Stay Alive

Each year, adventuresome children and young adults fall prey to the hazards that exist at active and abandoned quarries, refuse and stock piles, and mine shafts. Some are injured and others are killed. Stickers, posters and fact sheets with a **Stay Out - Stay Alive** slogan have been developed. MSHA will make this material available to civic groups, trade associations, or individuals interested in sharing it. In the Northeast District, MSHA inspectors contacted 208 schools in the recent program to raise awareness of this problem. Mine operators who have quarries or other operations near residential areas should fence the perimeter of their properties, and make sure the areas are posted with signs which warn of the hazards.

1999 Spring Initiative

MSHA inspectors visited small mines
during the Spring Initiative conducted May 10-28, 1999 to bring attention to the high number of fatalities occurring at small operations. A total of 13,977 miners were contacted nationwide. In the Northeast District a total of 2,622 miners were contacted. The number of mines visited during the initiative was 4,976 nationally, and 869 in the Northeast District. Nationally, 93.8% of all small mines were visited.

MSHA's Guide to Equipment Guarding for Metal and Nonmetal Mining

This 32-page guide (OT-3) was revised in 1992 and reprinted in 1999. This guide was written to assist industry, labor and MSHA inspectors on the subject of mechanical safeguarding. The guide includes illustrations that show specific applications of guards using expanded metal. Copies may be obtained by faxing an order to the National Mine Safety and Health Academy at (304) 256-3368, or calling Mary Lord, at:

(304) 256-3257.

Safety Audit for Aggregate Operators

Any Effective safety plan has to include a method for checking safety on a systematic basis. Safety audits are one way for accomplishing this goal. A good audit will establish a baseline from which you can begin to evaluate your operation and make changes possible to improve safety and health.

A good safety audit is focused on the most common violations found at aggregate operations. MSHA, along with industry representatives, have prepared a self audit package which addresses twenty conditions/practices which accounted for 84 percent of all violations cited at sand and gravel and crushed stone mining operations in 1997. Completing this self-audit package is a first step in developing a safety program that will avoid common conditions/practices at your mining operation. Remember this is a focused audit that only lists the most common violations found at aggregate operations. An audit package that covers all of part 56 standards is available, upon request.

The Safety Audit package is available by contacting MSHA's Educational Policy and Development, Educational Field Services at:

(303) 231-5434 (Rod Breland)

1999 Joint Meeting SME/PCMIA

The annual joint meeting of the Society of Mining Engineers (SME) and Pittsburgh Coal Mining Institute of America (PCMIA) is scheduled for Thursday October 28, 1999 and Friday October 29, 1999 at the Holiday Inn, Meadowlands, Washington, Pennsylvania.

This year they are including separate presentations aimed specifically at metal and non/metal mine operators.

Among the presentations scheduled are; **Automated Milling, Truck Training Seminar, Alternative Fuel Sources, MSHA/NSA Training on Dust and Noise Sampling, Environmental Cabs, and Y2K.**

There will be sessions running concurrently for individuals interested in Metal/Non Metal and/or Coal topics.

Registration will be on Thursday October 28, 1999 from 7:45 to 9:00 a.m. in the Main Lobby - Upper Level.

Further information may be obtained by contacting Joe Tortorea at:

(724) 925-5150

Mine Rescue Teams

The following information concerning Northeast District Mine Rescue Teams is reprinted from the MSHA Home Page.

There are three states in the Northeast District with Metal Non/Metal Mine Rescue Teams. They are as follows:

NEW YORK

Cayuga Mine; Cargill, Inc., Cargill Salt Division, Lansing, NY
(607) 533-4221

U.S. Gypsum Company - Oakfield Mine, Oakfield, NY
(716) 948-5221

ZCA Mines, Inc., Balmat Mine, Zinc Corporation of America
Hailesboro, NY
(315) 287-2500

PENNSYLVANIA

Bellefonte, Bellefonte Mine Rescue Station, Bellefonte, Pennsylvania
(724) 439-7469

WEST VIRGINIA

MSHA M/NM
Mine Safety and Health Administration
Beaver, WV, contact Whitey Jacobson at:
(214) 767-841

NIOSH Safety Seminar

Safety Seminar for Underground Stone Mines and Ventilation Information Workshop.

A free technology transfer **Safety Seminar for Underground Stone Mines** is scheduled for December 8, 1999. It will be presented at the Holiday Inn-Cincinnati Airport Hotel. The event consists of an "early bird" workshop and reception on December 7, 1999, followed by the seminar on December 8, 1999 (ending at 4:00 p.m.). The morning session of this year's seminar will consist of presentations by experts on new topics such as blasting, equipment selection, mine development planning, and an MSHA update. Participants will then be able to attend one of three afternoon sessions:

(1) **Customized Use of MSHA Accident Data to Identify Safety Focuses** presented by R. Larry Grayson, Ph. D., Associate Director for Mining, NIOSH. Includes downloading of the MSHA accident data using Excel and Access programs. (Target audience: mine management, superintendents, foremen).

(2) **"NEW" Hazard Recognition Training.** This session will review a New NIOSH training module designed to improve the hazard recognition skill level of miners. The module identifies key concepts from examples using three-dimensional photography and offers suggestions to improve or avoid the hazards. (Target audience: Miners, foremen, superintendents, labor, safety officials).

(3) **Engineering Techniques for Controlling Ground in Stone Mines** presented by Anthony T. Iannacchione, Ph. D., Deputy Director Pittsburgh Research Laboratory, NIOSH. This session will also include an update on the Roof Monitoring Safety System (RMSS). (Target audience: mine engineers, mine management).

As an added bonus, an "early bird" **Ventilation Information Workshop** will take place before the reception on December 7, 1999, from 4:00 to 5:30 p.m. Take advantage of this opportunity to learn more about ventilation.

For more information concerning this free seminar and workshop, contact Lou Prosser at:

(412) 386-4423, or e-mail at lfp2@cdc.gov

Part 46

MSHA's Part 46 final rulemaking is on track with a September 30, 1999 promulgation date. With initial publication in April, 1999 and 4 public meetings held around the country, it is hoped that the final rule will be published in the Federal Register before or by the September deadline.

Further information concerning Part 46 may be found by contacting Kathy Alejandro at (703) 235-1661, or on the MSHA Web Site at http://www.msha.gov.

Noise Standard

MSHA's final Occupational Noise Standard is being reviewed by the office of Management and Budget.

This rule would address requirements of establishing a hearing conservation program including annual audiometric testing, noise exposure assessment, and engineering/administrative controls.

Reduction of Silica Exposure

A two-day meeting concerning technology transfer will be held at the National Mine Safety and Health Academy in Beckley, West Virginia on August 25 and 26. Topics to be addressed will include silica hazard awareness, miner exposure levels and established practices to control silica.
Meetings will be conducted oriented toward Metal/Non Metal and Coal.

Videotapes Available

The following videotapes have been released and can be purchased for $8.00 each;

Eliminating Silicosis (metal and nonmetal) (VC932). Silicosis is a serious lung disease that results from exposure to silica dust which is often generated in the process of mining. Silicosis can be prevented. How bad can it be? How quickly can it be contracted without preventative steps? The video answers these questions, as well as discusses some of the historical steps taken to reduce exposure to silica. 25 minutes.

Fatal Alert: Entry Into Storage Silos (VC943). This video addresses the hazards involved in cleaning a storage silo. A rescue worker describes a recovery operation of a worker who fell into one of the silos. 11 minutes.

Good Berms Save Lives (metal and nonmetal) (VC928). This informative video discusses one mine's concern about berms on their mine property. The mine studied their berms using various materials and different berm heights. The size and speed of mining equipment, weather conditions, and grades also play a role in proper berm construction. 15 minutes.

Locating and Rescue of Trapped Miners (VC927). This video describes the equipment and methods used to locate trapped miners in an underground mine environment. 18 minutes.

Safety on or Near Water (VC925). This video discusses the hazards of working on or near the water and the precautions that need to be taken to protect the workers in this situation. 14 minutes.

Silicosis: A Preventable Disease (VC929). An employee's questions about the health effects of silica dust exposure are answered. 19 minutes.

Stay Calm and Stay in the Cab! (VC940). In this video a bulldozer operator tells how it felt to be buried in a surge pile cavity and how his company's safety efforts, before and during the accident, contributed to his safe recovery. 12 minutes.

To order or to receive a complete list of training videos available for purchase or loan contact the National Mine Safety and Health Academy, Beckley, West Virginia, by faxing and order to:

(304) 256-3368

Introduction to Operator Air Sampling Programs

This 19-page document contains information to be used as basic guidance material to assist mine operators in planning for effective monitoring of their employees' exposure to silica dust and other airborne contaminants, and in determining the various needs for and adequacy of control measures required by 30 CFR 56/57.5002. Included in the text are sections on Determining Sampling Strategy: Whom to Sample; Where to Sample; How to Sample; What to Sample for and Why; Mineral Dusts; Mists and Elemental Dusts; Fumes; Asbestos and Mineral Fibers; and Miscellaneous Gases and Vapors. This information is also available on MSHA's Home Page or by contacting Larry Macken, NE District Industrial Hygienist at: (724) 772-2336.

"Y2K" The Year 2000

As you probably know, many computers use two digits to keep track of the year. The concern is that on January 1, 2000, these computers will recognize "double zero" not as the year 2000 but as 1900. This problem could cause them to stop running or start generating erroneous data.

Federal government agencies, including the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) are taking every step possible to ensure that our computer systems and interfaces are Year 2000 compliant. At MSHA , we anticipate being completely Year 2000 compliant by March 1999, prior to this writing.

There is an urgent need for the mining industry to consider all aspects of the Year 2000 problem, including some points of which you may not be aware. While it has been widely reported how this problem affects government and financial systems, little has been reported on how this worldwide problem also affects personal computers and many pieces of hardware that contain microchips. Systems and equipment specific to the mining industry, some of which have a direct impact on miner health and safety, include:

- mine monitoring systems;
- process control systems;
- automated longwall support systems;
- remote-control miners;
- telecommunications equipment;
- gas, water and electrical utilities; and
- office equipment and security systems.

Some personal computers are still being shipped with the incorrect BIOS (software built into a computer where system date information is stored). It is estimated that 47% of all PCS manufactured in 1997, and as many as 79% of PCS built prior to 1997, are not year 2000 compliant. One large PC manufacturer was shipping computers with non-year 2000 compliant BIOS up until the first quarter of 1997. Most older generation mini and mainframe systems were designed with the space-saving two-digit date field and should be upgraded or replaced.

Most large organizations have been working for several years on resolving potential Year 2000 problems in their systems. The mining industry includes a large number of small operations which are subject to Year 2000 failures and need information to help them identify and resolve problems. Small businesses can use the information to help determine whether they will have Year 2000 problems. They can plan corrective actions to minimize financial losses from paying premium prices for Year 2000 conversion assistance, which will become increasingly costly as the millennium date approaches.

There are may helpful sources you can turn to for making you business ready for the century date change. The Internet has thousands of web sites dedicated to the Year 2000 problem. Many sites have links to sources of freeware, planning tools, discussion groups, and so forth.

Here is a short list of useful Web sites:

! **The Small Business Administration - Small Business**

Help for the Year 2000.

! **The University of Maryland - Year 2000.**

! **America's Job Bank - Job Search Page.**

! **Y2K Resource Page - Sponsored by IEEE-USA.**

Perhaps the most important thing that those at the top levels of mining industry management can do is to get enough information from technical personnel to be certain they have identified and solved the problem. MSHA personnel are available to assist the mining industry in assessing individual concerns and developing solutions to potential problems.

If you have questions or concerns regarding Y2K in the mining industry please feel free to contact V.J. Kebis, Coordinator for Y2K issues at (703) 235- 1372, or Mike Snyder,project leader on Industry Outreach, in Triadelphia, WV., at (304) 547-2047 or you may log on to the Internet "Y2K Issues" at Y2K@msha.gov.

Training Checklist

The following information was taken from the Best Practices Training Checklist, developed by the Surface Haulage Safety Task Force in Cooperation with MSHA. The Best Practices for the Training of Truck Drivers is not a complete training program. However, if followed, you can help maintain a safe working environment for yourself and your coworker. It will provide you, the truck driver, with useful information on how to safely operate the truck.

Training is an opportunity to transform a work force into a safe, cost-effective, efficient, and productive team. It is up to you to provide the opportunity to make it happen and turn mining into the safest industry possible for the miner.

Training should always be done before the driver starts production work at the mine. If possible, new drivers should be tested on their knowledge after the initial hands-on training, then rechecked periodically.
At intervals, drivers should be observed to ensure that they have not developed any bad habits and to reinforce the training.

General Safety.

Personal Safety Equipment, hard hat, steel toe boots, safety glasses, gloves, hearing and dust protection.

Seat Belts.
Seat belts are required at all times when haul truck is in use. Seat belt in good working order.
Pre-Operation Inspection. The machine should be in a safe location before conducting the pre-operation inspection. Be sure to check all fluids, safety devices and equipment prior to beginning operation.

Know the Controls (Location and Operation) - All Brakes, Signals, Accessories, Instrumentation and Warning Devices. Know how they work, normal and abnormal readings and what should be done if alarm sounds (All international symbols should be explained to the operator).

Ensure operators know the Proper Start-Up and Shut Down Procedures.

Truck Operation, Working Procedures, Spotting at Dump Locations, Operating on Grades, How to Reduce Component Damage, Know the Machine Systems, and housekeeping.

These truck training guidelines have been developed to assist in building a knowledge and awareness of safe haul truck operation. They were designed to give the basic "How-To" operation parameters and are not a complete training program.

Note: It is important that every truck operator read the truck operator's manual and use good common sense when operating any piece of equipment. Always report any changes, such as unusual sounds and operating responses, in your equipment. (Anything your senses can pick up).

This handout can be obtained from Mary Lord at the Mine Safety and Health Academy, by faxing an order to (304) 256-3368.